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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL.....One of the President's highest priorities has been to improve the management and performance of the Federal government. To date, significant progress has been made. As part of the renewed commitment to Federal management, the President has issued Executive Order 12157, dated September 14, 1979, to establish a President's Management Improvement Council. The nineteen member Council will consist of representatives from Federal Agencies, State and local governments, private industry, labor organizations, and academic and professional organizations. Alan K. Campbell, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and James T. McIntyre, Jr., will be Co-chairpersons of the Council. The role of the Council will be to:

- Advise the President on significant and critical management problems and issues affecting Executive agencies and Government programs.
- Work cooperatively with the Comptroller General, senior program management and administrative officials, and the Inspector General to provide advice and guidance on specific management improvement projects involving one or more Executive agencies.
- Advise Executive agencies in the development of management systems or management techniques to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of Federal programs.
- Advise Executive agencies of solutions to critical management problems, as well as constraints on management effectiveness.
- Utilize the experience of the public and private sectors.
- Identify and facilitate the application to Federal programs of appropriate successful systems and techniques which have been elsewhere in the public and private sectors.

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management will report annually to Congress on the Council. The Council will terminate on December 31, 1980, unless extended. (Contact: Neil Van Vliet, MS. ext. 76983)

OEO ANNUAL REPORT.....The FY 1978 OEO Annual Report is being distributed through agency equal opportunity directors. This report highlights equal opportunity events and details minority participation in USDA programs. All requests for copies of the report should be directed to agency EO directors. (Contact: Fred Hazelwood, OEO, ext. 75113)

NEW DATA COLLECTION GUIDELINES.....The Department of Justice has issued new guidelines directing Federal agencies to collect data on race and ethnic background for Federal benefit program applicants on all application forms. These guidelines, issued on November 20, also recommend that data by sex and age be obtained. On December 10, OMB also issued Federal agency guidelines (44 Federal Register 70941) for collection of program data by race, ethnic background, age and sex. Where applicants decline to furnish this information, it is to be supplied by the application taker when possible.

Beginning with this fiscal year, USDA agencies are collecting program participation data by sex. OEO has transmitted the Justice and OMB guidelines to agencies and has requested recommendations on the collection of data by age and by handicapped status by January 31. (Contact: Fred Hazelwood, OEO, ext. 75113)

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON SMALL BUSINESS.....President Carter last year called for a White House Conference on Small Business in an effort to build a new awareness of the importance of small business in the national economy. He stated that "such a Conference can help us identify the many special problems facing small business and design a course of action that can address these problems in a constructive way." The Conference is taking place January 13-17 at the Washington Hilton and Sheraton Washington Hotels. Twenty-two hundred delegates representing over 30,000 small business owners from every State will develop recommendations for presentation to the President and Congress. Their proposals will chart a course for Federal policies impacting small business for the 1980's. (Contact: Preston Davis, OSDDBU, 472-1994)

CHANGES IN AGENCY-LEVEL MANAGEMENT.....

- Ed McElhanon, ESCS Deputy Administrator for Administration retired on January 12. Ed, a retired Air Force colonel, joined the Department in 1971 as Deputy Director of the Office of Management Services. Dick Ballard has been designated as Acting Director for Administration.
- John W. Ennest, a participant in the President's Executive Exchange Program, has joined FmHA as Acting Deputy Administrator for Financial and Administrative Operations. John is a graduate of the University of Detroit and holds an MBA from Michigan State. He joined the National Bank of Detroit in 1965 and, in 1971, was appointed Vice President and Assistant Controller and placed in control of the Management controls group. In 1977, he became responsible for the Financial Accounting and Operations Departments.

RECOGNITION FOR THE FOREST SERVICE.....

- The NAACP has expressed thanks and appreciation to the Forest Service by awarding a "Certificate of Recognition" for their participation, support and encouragement in the 70th annual convention and industry show in Louisville.

The Forest Service Human Resource Program exhibit, a newcomer to the industry show, generated interest and enthusiasm concerning all FS activities. FS staff members participated in discussions concerning the recruitment, placement and career opportunities for minorities and women within the agency. A major objective of the FS at this convention was to establish contact with other organizations having similar responsibilities and interests and to create linkage necessary for FS to accomplish its overall mission. (Contact: Guanda Veney, FS, ext. 77783)

- A cash award of \$35,000, the largest ever approved by the President in the history of the Federal Incentive Awards Program, has been divided among 42 employees of the FS. The employees won the awards in recognition of their roles in the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). This study, which began in June 1977 and was completed in December 1978, consisted of identifying 62 million acres of roadless and undeveloped National Forest System lands and recommending their classification into Wilderness, nonwilderness and further planning categories. (Contact: Diane O'Connor, FS, ext. 74211)

SES MEMBER DEVELOPMENT.....The Civil Service Reform Act provides for the continuing development of SES members. USDA agencies have primary responsibility for identifying developmental opportunities for SES personnel and for assuring that they receive the experiences needed for continued development. Agencies are responsible for preparing an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) for each SES member tied into the performance evaluation cycle. IDP's for FY 1981 will be considered by the Departmental Performance Review Boards along with their other review responsibilities this fall. Those agencies with IDP's in effect for SES members have been requested to forward them to the Executive Development Unit of the Civil Service Reform Act Implementation Group. This unit will monitor the process and analyze the trends of the experiences of SES members. (Contact: John Kizler, OP, ext. 74258)

SES CANDIDATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.....The Department's Program Executive Resources Boards have begun review of the 150 applicants reviewed by the agencies for the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program announced November 16, 1978. Following participation in the Customized Assessment Process scheduled for January 28 - February 8, the Secretary's Executive Resources Boards will make final selection by February 22. In addition, agencies have been asked to submit recommendations for SESCO mentors by February 1. (Contact: John Kizler, OP, ext. 74258)

AGENCY MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT.....

- Employee Suggestions - FCIC has implemented a special program, "Take It To The Top", which will permit FCIC employees to send suggestions and ideas directly to the Manager. This program, which has been implemented for a 3-4 month period, will directly involve the Manager and is expected to have high pay out. Ideas and suggestions submitted deserving recognition will be processed under the awards program. This program will permit a free flow to the agency head bypassing intervening levels of supervision. (Contact: Roy Alton, FCIC, ext. 76975)
- High-Speed Facsimile System - ASCS has installed high speed facsimile equipment connecting 53 field offices and Washington, D.C. to speed up the dissemination of information.

The equipment provides transmission speeds of 30-60 seconds for a standard page with a capability of simultaneously reaching all 53 locations with copy that can be used as a camera-ready reproduction master. It is expected that this equipment will result in reduced printing, postal and UPS charges. (Contact: Wayne Wang, ASCS, ext. 72717)

- Postage Metering - At least 3 USDA agencies have installed postage metering equipment to reduce postage costs. The results to date have been significant. ASCS conducted an 8 month pilot study in 10 field offices resulting in a total postage savings of \$112,000. FCIC has installed equipment in Washington and in a limited number of field offices. It is estimated that the \$73,265 equipment cost will be recovered in about two years. Other FCIC offices are now scheduled for conversion and ASCS will expand coverage to all State offices. These savings may be attributed, to a large extent, to the difference in rate calculation. For example, the USPS in their periodic sampling of mail charges a flat 57 cents for a particular size envelope based on the size of that envelope, regardless of weight. Through the use of postage metering, the actual charge, based on weight, is 17 cents. Metering is increasing the awareness of personnel to postage costs and is encouraging better mail management practices. (Contacts: Wayne Wang, ASCS, ext. 72717, Roy Alton, FCIC, ext. 76975)

TRAINING SEMINAR FOR AGENCY ETHICS COUNSELORS.....The Security and Employee Relations Division, Office of Personnel, is conducting a training seminar for agency ethics counselors on January 15, 16 and 17 concerning E.O. 11222, the Surface Mining Act and the Ethics Act. Coverage will include the basic regulations and requirements of each and will also provide information on the practical aspects of review and determination on financial disclosure statements. (Contact: Clyde Fisk, OP, ext. 73327)

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE.....The next deadlines for submission of Management Council Newsletter articles is February 13. Please submit all articles of interest to management officials of the Department to Neil I. Van Vliet, Management Staff, Room 115-A.